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LESSON LEARNED

Shelter Operations: Arranging Sufficient Provisions to Accommodate Shelter Populations

SUMMARY

State and local emergency managers should consider creating a catalogue to identify the type and number of commodities necessary to sustain short- and long-term sheltering and feeding operations. Managers should then notify the appropriate Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Regional Response and Coordination Center (RRCC) of these needs. This will allow the region either to procure or to mobilize the commodities necessary to support the jurisdiction's sheltering and feeding operations.

DESCRIPTION

The FEMA Region III Hurricane Preparedness Tabletop Exercise in August 2006 tested the Mid-Atlantic Region's response to a Category 3 hurricane. The scenario anticipated the impact of Hurricane Omni, which made landfall near Virginia Beach and moved up the Eastern side of the Delmarva peninsula in Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia before turning west and dissipating in West Virginia. The exercise allowed participants, including representatives of the Region III states as well as federal entities and non-governmental organizations, to identify regional, state, and local emergency management issues.

During the exercise, participants from the District of Columbia (DC) discovered that they did not have sufficient provisions to support the immediate or long-term shelters that they established. In an emergency, DC shelter residents would not have appropriate levels of food, water, personal hygiene items, and other necessary commodities.

The after-action report recommended that DC emergency planners identify the provisions required to sustain shelter and feeding operations by examining the type and number of typically requested commodities. It also encouraged DC emergency planners to create and to submit a catalogue so that the RRCC can procure or mobilize the appropriate resources before an emergency.

Jurisdictions should consider creating a catalogue of provisions they identify as necessary to sustain short- and long-term sheltering and feeding operations. This method allows jurisdictions to ensure that the requested provisions will be available in an emergency, thereby sufficiently accommodating disaster-affected residents.

CITATION

FEMA Region III. *Region III Hurricane Preparedness Tabletop Exercise After-Action Report*. 01 Aug 2006, p. 45.

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